

The Ryder Cup

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

Steve Stricker

Daniel Berger

Harris English

Tony Finau

Xander Schauffele

Scottie Scheffler

Jordan Spieth

Media Conference

JULIUS MASON: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the 2020 United States Ryder Cup captain's picks news conference here at Whistling Straits, site of the 43 rd Ryder Cup. At the head table is 2020 U.S. Ryder Cup Captain Steve Stricker.

On August 29, six players qualified for a spot on this team based on a point system. Today, Captain Stricker will name six additional players that will join those automatic qualifiers to complete his 12-member team.

So Captain, the floor is yours. Please let us know, and the world, who you've selected as your newest team members.

STEVE STRICKER: Good morning. Thanks, Julius.

Good morning, everyone. It's been a long time coming but super excited for this day and super excited for this team that we've put together so far with the six picks -- well, the six automatic qualifiers of Patrick, Bryson, Dustin, Brooks, Collin and Justin. Super excited about those top six, and let's not wait any longer and let's get straight to the captain's picks.

After consulting with not only those top six players but my vice captains and our analytic team, Scouts, my captain's picks are: Daniel Berger, Harris English, Tony Finau, Xander Schauffele, Scottie Scheffler and Jordan Spieth.

We are super excited about these six individuals, as I look at them there on the screen. Talked to each and every one of them a couple days ago, and they are extremely excited and happy and fired up to be a part of this team. All a



great fit for Whistling Straits, and they all told me they can't wait to get here and to do one thing, and that's to bring the Cup back where it belongs.

So super excited to have these guys and they are here to join us today.

JULIUS MASON: Captain, thank you very much. What jumps off the screen here is that you selected four Ryder Cup rookies in Xander, Harris, Daniel and Scottie, and you already had two rookies that qualified in Colin and Patrick. The last time a U.S. Team had six rookies was in 2008 which turned out pretty good for the U.S. Team at Valhalla Golf Club and you probably remember that because you were a rookie on that victorious team. You also know more than anybody else that Europe has won 9 of the 12 matches.

How much did trying to identify veterans versus rookies play a part in your decision-making process?

STEVE STRICKER: We are looking to the best players to perform here at Whistling Straits, and these six guys that we picked, we feel like fit Whistling Straits to a T. We have done some analysis of those rookies since 2008, and U.S. rookies are a 40-29-17 record in Ryder Cup. So rookies fare very well in this type of forms, and we're excited to have these rookies.

Some of them aren't really rookies. They have played in past Presidents Cup teams. Some of these guys have match play competition under their belt as well and other events that they played, The World Match Play. So we are excited. So we don't really feel like they are rookies, we are just happy to have these guys and they fit the course to a T.

JULIUS MASON: Let's break this down a little bit more and learn why you selected each player that you did. And let's begin with Daniel Berger, a player you know well because he secured the winning point for you under your captaincy at Liberty National.

What impresses you so much about him that you've come back to him again?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, with Daniel, we know what we're getting: A great competitor, no weaknesses really in his game. Very consistent. He played well this year, especially in the last couple majors he's played very well. Just a gutsy, classy guy with a never give up attitude. We're excited and excited to have him be a part of this team for sure.

JULIUS MASON: Congratulations, Daniel and welcome to the United States Ryder Cup Team.

Can you tell us, what is it about Captain Stricker and his style that you appreciate so much?

DANIEL BERGER: Well, I think he's a great leader from the experience that I had at the Presidents Cup at Liberty National. He makes it about the players, which I think is very important in a team environment.

So I'm for sure grateful for the opportunity to be alongside him and represent the United States of America and love to put some points on the board for Team USA.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks very much.

Captain, you also selected Harris English.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, Harris English, it's really been a breakout year for Harry. He's got two wins this year, 11th in the world. So he brings a lot of energy, a lot of power. Great putter. As we saw, some great putting throughout the year from him this year, and really, you know, he's a rookie but he's been around a long time.

He's an older guy. He's been around the block a few times and we're truly excited to have him, another great guy in the team room, and we're looking forward to have him be a part of this team for sure.

JULIUS MASON: Congratulations, Harris, like Captain Stricker said, it's difficult to call you a rookie when you're the second-oldest on the team at 32 only behind Dustin Johnson who is 37.

When did making The Ryder Cup Team hit your radar? Because you've played some really, really good golf this summer, and how do you think your calm, cool demeanor will fit in in a Ryder Cup environment?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I just want to say I'm excited to make this team. It's been a goal of mine since I first turned pro, and to be able to play for Captain Stricker is going to be an unbelievable experience.

I didn't know that being 32 was considered old these days, but like Strick said, this is my 10th year on Tour, and I've been around this game a lot and dealt with some adversity that everybody is going to deal with in this game, and I think that's big for match play.

Obviously being down a couple matches, you have to climb back and grind out and I feel like I'm really good at that, and I feel like I can get along with everybody on the team and I can play with anybody, and looking forward to the challenge at Whistling Straits and looking forward to putting some points on the board for the U.S.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks very much, Harris.

Next up, Captain: Tony Finau.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, Tony won just a few weeks ago and it was good to see him get back in the winner's circle. Tremendous athlete. Very long off the tee, which, again, we believe will fit Whistling Straits to a T. He finished seventh in our Ryder Cup points so it shows you the consistency that we had in this long process of trying to gain these points with an extra year involved.

So we are excited. He's a tremendous guy, tremendous athlete. Has got so much talent. I don't even know if he knows how much talent he has. I mean, everybody watches him hit the ball and we are all amazed at how far and how straight he hits it, so excited to have Tony a part of this team.

JULIUS MASON: Very good. Congratulations and welcome to your second Ryder Cup Team.

You were a captain's pick in 2018 when you played well in Paris and now get to play at a home Ryder Cup. What lessons can you take away from Paris that will help you here at Whistling Straits, do you think?

TONY FINAU: Thanks. First of all I'm honored to join this team and join my captains and my fellow teammates. It's quite an honor to represent the USA, red, white and blue. I'm looking forward to Whistling Straits.

I think some of the experiences I can draw back on are some of the wins I had in Paris that I put on the board and kind of draw from these experiences to help bring the Cup back to the U.S. So it's fun being part of these teams. It's awesome for me to make my second team and to join these great group of guys.

I didn't know 32 was old, Harry. I'm going to turn 32 next week, so I guess I'm going to be right there with you as one of the older guys on the team. But to join the young guys

in this group and our captains, to join these young guys and our group and our captain I'm extremely excited and honored to be part of this team. It's just great to be home and we're going to get the job done and bring the Cup back, so I'm excited to be part of the squad.

JULIUS MASON: Up next, Xander Schauffele.

STEVE STRICKER: Our first Gold Medalist to be part of the U.S. Ryder Cup Team. Solid across the board, great competitor, long off the tee. He pairs very well with others. He's just another example of this young movement in our sport, and plays well in huge events. He's no rookie. He's a Ryder Cup rookie but he's played in a Presidents Cup and pairs well with others.

Extremely excited to have Xander as part of this team.

JULIUS MASON: Congratulations, Xander. You clearly understand team event pressure having performed well as a rookie in Melbourne in 2019.

What are your expectations now to play in front of tens of thousands of spectators, the vast majority of which will be pulling for you and Team USA?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's exciting. I first off want to thank Strick and all the captains for picking me and believing in me to be on this team. I'm excited to run with all these boys, a lot of familiar faces. 32 is not old. I'm happy that 32 is on the "older" side for our team. I think it's a good time for a younger influx of players and really excited to run with these guys.

I don't have much experience in a lot of team formats. I do pair well with others. I'll be pulling from certain experiences from Melbourne to get in the flow of things. I think the fans will be really excited. They are going to be really excited to come out and support us when the time is right.

JULIUS MASON: Thank you very much, Xander.

Next Cup, captain, Scottie Scheffler.

STEVE STRICKER: Scottie is a true rookie, not played in a Presidents Cup or a Ryder Cup. But he showed us what he's able to do at the World Match Play this year by taking down Poulter and Rahm and Jason Day. That caught our attention early on. Another guy who is long off the tee. His stats across the board are very solid from top to bottom, and the guy makes a lot of birdies, which should do us very well going around Whistling Straits.

So Scottie, welcome to the team. Happy to have you and

glad you can be a part of this.

JULIUS MASON: Scottie, thank you very much for being here. Can you tell us what it was like to get the call from Captain Stricker, and not only to make team but to have your name listed among a talented U.S. roster like this?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: Yeah, to get the call from Strick was amazing. The last month, month and a half has been pretty stressful not knowing where I stand in trying to play good golf with this team hanging over my head. It's been a dream of mine since I knew about The Ryder Cup to play on this team and I'm honored to be a part of it.

I know the players and the vice captains, I know there's a lot of people involved in the process and so to have the backing of the players, as well, is fantastic, and it gives me a lot of confidence going into the week. I'm really excited to get up there and start playing with the guys and take the Cup back hopefully.

JULIUS MASON: Well done, Scottie.

And finally, Captain, the sixth pick, the 12th player to finalize your team, is Jordan Spieth.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, when you think about American golf and young American golf, it starts with Jordan Spieth; a huge fan base of golf is due to Jordan. We're excited to see him playing well again, and excited to see his game trending in the right direction. He was runner-up here in 2015 at the PGA Championship. This year was kind of a resurgent year for him this year so we're happy to see him playing well.

Obviously this goes without being said: He's just a great putter, which is always key in Ryder Cups, and you know, we partnered together. I know what he brings to the table. He's a good guy and we're extremely happy to have him.

JULIUS MASON: Welcome to your fourth consecutive Ryder Cup Team, the longest of any of the Americans. You're looked at as a staple on this team and as Captain Stricker reminded us, you played well here in the most recent major championship at Whistling Straits.

What do you like about this golf course, and how do you think it will shape up as a match-play venue?

JORDAN SPIETH: First off, it's a beautiful golf course on the lake. Should be a great setting in the fall, as well. I'm excited to see the differences it presents from playing in August -- well, I guess it's only a month later.

But you have to shape the ball both ways off the tee and



into greens, so it requires kind of a lot of different shot-making abilities. You're likely going to have to wind so you've got to flight it and then you've also got to be able to launch the ball high and soft into the green. So it really tests every facet of the game.

I think I really enjoyed playing it back in 2015. I thought it was just an awesome golf course and obviously knowing The Ryder Cup was going there, well, five years later at the time, I thought that was going to be a huge goal to get back there and re-live some good memories and if it were last year, I may not have made the team.

So in a weird way I feel kind of fortunate that this goal was set at the beginning of this year for me, and it was kind of a lofty one. I had to make up a lot of ground after not having a lot of points the last couple years but very happy that Captain Stricker has put his trust in me.

And I love The Ryder Cup. There's really nothing like it in our sport.

Q. For Steve, being part of that that winning side in 2008 that had six rookies, what was the dynamic of having fresh blood that worked so well?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I think what these young guys bring is that -- well, everybody's getting younger in this sport it seems like. They are playing better at a younger age. They get some match play competition under their belts at the amateur level.

They bring in an excitement level that is unmatched I think, and they are eager, they are willing to learn, they just want to have that opportunity and they will do anything for that opportunity. I see that much in these six guys here as well in that they are just eager to get in there and play and they are excited to be a part of this.

I'm not saying that veterans aren't but they just come here with eyes wide open and "put me in Coach," kind of attitude. So it's refreshing. It's great to see. Like I said, the rookies since 2008, and even before that, went even deeper than that is very good.

Q. What consideration did you give to Patrick Reed given his circumstances, and I have no idea of the status of Koepka, but do you have an alternate ready to go in case he's hurt?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, Patrick Reed, that was a very, very difficult call. Kind of lost sleep over that one. Just trying to -- he's a tremendous competitor. He brings a lot to match-play golf. His record here at The Ryder Cup is pretty darned good.

It was a very difficult call. It wasn't an easy one. It was just the uncertainty of his health and really the lack of play that led to our decision down the stretch.

As far as Brooks goes, we've talked about if we have to replace Brooks but we're not there yet. We're focused on these 12 guys and moving forward with these 12 guys right now, and we'll deal with that situation if it were to happen. But as of now, we're moving forward with these 12 guys.

Q. I think a lot of people thought that the top four were locked in and that the last two picks would be the uncertain ones. When you were considering those two picks, what was the biggest factor? I may be thought from your comments it was course fit but I wanted to see what you had to say there.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, definitely course fit, and the way these guys have been playing, all six of these guys have been playing some really good golf and for a long period of time, and I didn't want to just leave it up to the last couple of events to make our determination on who is going to be the pick.

So it's more about a body of work. It was a long period of time. We probably put a little bit more emphasis on this last year, but yeah, all these guys played great throughout this year and very well deserving of these picks for sure.

Q. For Xander, specifically, do you feel like a rookie, regardless of your age?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: By definition, yes, it's a new environment. It's something I haven't done which is compete in a Ryder Cup. Do I mentally feel like one? No. I've been playing for quite some time, and it's a dream to play in a Ryder Cup, and I think whatever rookie feelings I have will quickly go away with all my fellow teammates pushing me along.

Q. Were you surprised when you got the call from Strick? Did you think it was a possibility? Have you talked to Jordan about what to expect when you get to Whistling Straits?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: I didn't know if I was going to get the call at the beginning of this week. We were waiting around to see what would happen. I felt like if I was picked to be on the team I could do a lot to help the team but I didn't really expect anything if I wasn't put on this team; I would understand why.

I'm just really looking forward to the next couple weeks. I've talked to a few of the guys so far and everybody is

really excited to get up there and get a few final rounds in and get a good feel for the course and get ready for the tournament in two weeks?

Q. Have you talked to Jordan since you got the pick?

SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER: No, we talked briefly the last couple weeks and we just set up some travel this week. That's about it. I think everyone's taking a little mental break after the grind of the season, and you've got to be mentally ready for the next two weeks. So I think we are all just kind of checking out for the first few days and start practicing here in a couple days.

Q. How many final candidates did you have? Essentially how many phone calls on the positive side, these six players here and how many other phone calls did you have to make last night?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, good question. I don't know if I counted them up. I called a lot of guys. I felt like they deserved hearing it from me.

You know, throughout this whole process I was keeping in touch with 20 to 25 guys throughout this whole deal. I probably called another five or six guys I think just to touch base with them to let them know where we stood.

Yeah, some were easier than others. Again, some of them were pretty difficult. The difficult part is I feel like I'm friends with a lot of these guys and to tell them that they are not part of something that they are dreaming to be a part of is pretty difficult.

So all in all it went pretty good I thought, and I left the six of these guys for the end, so I could end on a high note and that part was very special.

Q. Wanted to ask you with Whistling Straits and the difficulty that that course will present your team and the European Team.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, Whistling Straits is a tremendous test, a beautiful piece of property. It's just one of those iconic places here in our state thanks to Herb (Kohler) and his family. It started right here for Wisconsin golf to be quite honest. I mean, when Herb built these courses along with Blackwolf Run, it kind of put Wisconsin golf on the map.

Other people and other courses have followed behind but we owe a lot to Herb and his family for being able to have a Ryder Cup here in Wisconsin. Really a dream thing for Wisconsinites and people that are involved here. So thanks, Herb, and to your family.

It's going to be a great match-play course. I'm hoping for some good weather. We could have a little bit of anything the end of September. We have a beautiful day today, but you can get some big winds here or breezes off Lake Michigan, and it's going to be a challenge for all the guys and there's birdies to be made out there but there's also danger that lurks around every corner.

I think it's going to be a tremendous place to have this event.

Q. First, I understand you're having some guys come up there this weekend. Can you talk about how many and how important that is? And secondly, completely different, is there any kind of stipulations in case there's a COVID issue? Obviously I know that you can replace a player up to the first day, but given the unique circumstances, is there being anything discussed along those lines so that you wouldn't have to maybe have to use the envelope on Sunday?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, we're going to have a practice round here coming up here shortly. Again, from what I understand, all the players and all the caddies will be here. I don't know if that's ever happened in any other previous Ryder Cup where we've been all able to assemble at the venue before it actually takes place.

My message from day one has been to try to out-prepare the other team, the European Team, and for me, it's been that way throughout my career is just trying to prepare the best as I can when I go into events.

So my message is to let's -- I'll prepare these guys. Let's get in as much practice as we can here. Maybe take a little bit of the stress of Ryder Cup week off our plates by getting our work done now earlier than Ryder Cup week and get some rest that week. But let's help prepare them, so all the guys are coming. I'm excited to see them all. We'll go out, have a good time, get to learn the course a little bit. Work on some pairings during that time and from what I understand, they are all looking forward to it.

So although they are all laughing now, so maybe they are not looking forward to it. But it should be fun.

Q. Just on the COVID stuff, is there anything different related to that?

STEVE STRICKER: You know, I think that's been kind of an ongoing process, creating this bubble, creating our team zone. You know, there's going to be some extra names in the envelope, but the 12 guys are the 12 guys at this point. We're going to try to remain and be as safe as

possible leading up to The Ryder Cup and throughout that week so we don't have to replace anybody. That's our goal.

Yeah, there's some things I'm sure the PGA will go over with you guys when it's appropriate. But as of right now, it's full steam ahead with these 12 guys.

Q. Of those phone calls that you made to the players that didn't make it, did you tell anyone that they are the 13th guy; that they will be the guy that will come if someone has COVID or Koepka can't play?

STEVE STRICKER: No. No. We haven't gone that far. And you know, we've talked amongst ourselves, amongst my assistant captains and myself, and we have some options out there if it gets to that, but that's only if it gets to that I guess.

Q. Given Kevin Na's recent form, playing well over the last few months and he was lobbying to be a pick, what was that call like and how strongly did you consider Kevin?

STEVE STRICKER: Another tough call because I know how passionate he is about wanting to be on this team. And again, that was not easy. There's really -- the underlying thing is he's a gutsy guy and he's a great competitor like I said. He finished 19th on our Ryder Cup point list and even though he played well down the stretch, there were some things, length off the tee I think was a big deal for us, but yeah, who is to say, right. He could have been a really good part of this team and a positive team member.

But there's other guys that played better than him for a longer period of time, and we kind of looked at it more as, like I said earlier, a body of work instead of just the last tournament or two, and really kind of leaned on guys who really fit the course more so than anything, and the six guys that I pick, feel like really fit the course to a T.

Q. The bra have a dough you starred the press conference with, staying you're going to bring the Cup where it belongs, when you enter Whistling Straits, is that where you consciously think about the name on your hat and representing your state and that rare opportunity you get as a captain?

STEVE STRICKER: No. I've been thinking about it since I've received this opportunity and yeah, it's a huge honor. I'm very humbled by this honor. Obviously when you come here and you stroll in, and you start to see the signage and things that have gone on and taken place, for this to happen in a few weeks, you think a little bit more and a

little bit deeper.

Yeah, this has been a huge treat, even though it's been an extra year, I could have done without the extra year. But it's been a good ride. It's gotten a little bumpier of late, probably because of the whole COVID and trying to make sure we are all staying safe and trying to do the right things there.

Yeah, it's a special thing for me and my family.

Q. You talked about course fit in multiple answers so far. When you assess these guys do you take into account the time of year you're playing at Whistling Straits and the special challenges that come playing in mid-fall at this course?

STEVE STRICKER: No doubt about it, we looked into, with help of our analytical team, wind players, better wind players; like I said it can be breezy here as we have that today.

Yeah, so we look at a bunch of different things, how they pair well with others is another huge component. You know, how they are in the team room. I think is another huge component.

I want to make sure that we are going to get along and be together and have that camaraderie as good as any year I've been a part of these teams, all that put together. But ultimately how these guys fit the course I think is the biggest determining factor.

Q. You know Wisconsin sports fans as well as anyone, you had them embrace you in 2015 and 2017 at Erin Hills, what is your message to the rookies about what the first tee experience will be like in front of these Wisconsin fans?

STEVE STRICKER: There's no first tee experience like The Ryder Cup. It is an unbelievable experience. They show up early. They are loud. They are boisterous. They are full of passion and energy.

So you have to be prepared for that as a rookie. You know, we have even gone to the extreme and not -- it's really not an extreme. I guess having our guys go out there a little bit early just to see that first tee before they get there to hit their shot. I mean, it can be overwhelming and daunting. But I think these guys, they will embrace it. They have been put in difficult situations before. They are all trained to handle these types of situations.

So they will enjoy it, they will relish it and that's what you've got to learn to do is just enjoy that atmosphere. There's

nothing better than Wisconsin sports fans. They come out in full force, but I also understand there's tickets from all 50 states, am I right in saying that? We have a huge representation across our country which is also very cool to see.

Q. You mentioned the extra year. You've had the title of captain for 31 months. What have those 31 months meant to you dealing with the significant challenges of COVID and what is it like knowing you're almost towards the finish line here?

STEVE STRICKER: You go through all the different emotions from the day you're announced to all the way up to today. There's been a calls. There's been a lot of work. But it's all worth it. In the end, it's all going to be worth it and we are only a couple weeks away, so the end is in sight. Not that I want it to be over but I'm looking for that first tee ball on Friday morning and can't wait for that to be here and I'm sure these guys can't wait for that to be here, too.

Wisconsin is ready, I'm ready and my guys are ready.

Q. Over the last year, really speaks to the team's consistency that the guys stayed up in the points rankings, so what does that say to you to have a team of guys, all of them in the top heading into a unique tournament?

STEVE STRICKER: What's neat to see that is they have all played great golf throughout an extended period of time. That's what made the choices in my eyes pretty easy, and after consulting with the six guys that made the team and my assistant captains, we landed on these six guys pretty easily just because of their form, the way they fit Whistling Straits; their demeanors on and off the golf course and in the team room, I've experienced that with a couple of these guys.

So it just seemed like a natural perfect fit for these six to join the rest of them. I know they are extremely excited to be a part of it.

Q. Pádraig Harrington said a while ago that he didn't think there were too many things you could do to the course to tip it to your favor. We know you're not going to tip your hand but do you agree with that, and if so, why?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, there are some things that we can do and have done to hopefully tip it in our favor. Yeah, I'm not going to tell you what we did (smiling). Hopefully, and I'm sure they know what they are, too.

I mean we know what we are going to get into when we go over and play on their soil, and they know what they are going to get when they come here to play at the U.S.

For me, the weather is going to play a role. I hate the wind. My guys love the wind, though. We've got some great wind players but I want some nice weather. I think we don't want to go around here in any Irish kind of weather. We want some nice Wisconsin fall weather and 70 degrees and have people come out and enjoy the day and enjoy the event.

Q. How long did you talk with the six guys that had made the team about the six you selected and how deep did that get?

STEVE STRICKER: It was an ongoing conversation all the time. As the closer we got to the picks, obviously it ramped up even more. I was in their guys' kitchens quite a bit to see who they felt like would round out this team.

Ultimately it's my decision, but I want to make sure -- those guys are out there playing, playing with each other all the time. They understand their games, who would make good pairings. Pairings was a key determination in who we picked, as well.

So it was an ongoing conversation with everybody, and it still is ongoing now with trying to pair these guys with the right people we see fit, and we'll consult with them some more to see who they feel like would bring out their best golf.

Yeah, it's ongoing all the time Steve.

Q. Circling back to Patrick Reed, given what this event has meant to him in recent years, can you talk about your discussions with Patrick and how he received the news that he would not be on this team?

STEVE STRICKER: What was the question?

JULIUS MASON: You want to ask that question again?

Q. Could you describe how the conversation went with him when you broke the news that Patrick would not be on this team.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, like I said, it was a very hard conversation. I called him first thing. He was my first call. I just -- I knew, you know, that it was going to be hard. But he took it like a true champion, and I apologized many times to him and just wanted to make sure that he knew that it was a very difficult decision.

He handled it like I said a champion and really took it well. Very disappointed as you can imagine but he said all the right things and handled it very well.

Q. A year ago at this time you were hovering around 70th in the world and going into March, you were in the 20s in The Ryder Cup standings and I just wonder, in your climb back where this was in your kind of picture of what you wanted to get back to of making this team, where did that rank among the things that you were looking to get to?

JORDAN SPIETH: I would say it was probably the second-loftiest goal I've set for myself this year with the first being trying to major championship the Olympic Team just because that one was going to be harder, only four spots, got to be Top 15 in the world that kind of stuff. I think it kind of came on to my radar after the Masters this year. I finished third, and the majors are highly rated and that was a big boost for me.

From there, just thought carry the momentum into the big events and kind of reset some goals, and with The Ryder Cup being the ultimate one at the end of the season. It probably wasn't until April that I thought I've got a good chance of making the team, probably via pick, given there's only six spots unless you've won a major or PLAYERS in the last couple years, it's very difficult to make that top six.

I would say from April on, it became something on the forefront of my mind as I went into tournaments. I thought after The Open Championship, that it was probably going to become a reality and that was super exciting so when I got the call from Strick a couple days ago, that was kind of a goal for this year and it's always every couple years, it's typically a top or the top goal on my list.

Q. It's been three years since Paris. Being on the wrong side of this has to eat at you. I wonder how does that weigh on you and how hard is it to have to wait this long for another chance at it?

TONY FINAU: I was with Jordan. We were standing on the green watching them celebrate in 2018 and I'm sure he remembers that. It's never a good feeling losing, especially them having the home crowd behind them and cheering for them and things.

So I remember that vividly and at that time, I made it a goal to try and make this team so I can kind of return the favor. So I'm happy to be a part of this squad, just to have that opportunity to play in front of our home crowd and hopefully bring the Cup back to the USA.

It was a kind of salty feeling watching them celebrate right

there on the green right there in front of us, but we had an opportunity to kind of return the favor this year and hopefully we're able to do that with this squad.

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, as Tony mentioned, it was awful on that green. I don't know of many sporting events where you have to stand there afterwards and watch after you've lost. I've done it twice now, in Gleneagles and then in Paris, and then been able to be on the good side of it, as well.

So it's a very defeating feeling. You just have to stand there and watch it, and then you kind of just want to go back to your team room and decompress. So it's one of those where I remember walking off that green thinking let's not go through this again. It was way more fun in 2016. So glad to be back on home soil. They feel very different, the away games and the home games, I think between Strick and the vice captains he's chosen, should leave a real lightness to our team room and a nice, new, younger contingency of players and as you mentioned with the success of rookies in this event, I can't stress enough how little that means in this event for success.

So I've been a rookie and had success in the event, and all these guys have contended in the biggest tournaments in the world and won the biggest tournaments in the world, and I think they are going to have a blast and really hope to be on that 2016 side of things where Phil Mickelson is pouring champagne in your mouth while you get to celebrate with all the American fans.

Q. You paired with Strick and played for in The Presidents Cup. Can you give us an example of his intensity in that type of setting?

JORDAN SPIETH: There's no fakeness to Steve Stricker. What you see now and every time you've talked to him is who he is. He carried me big time that first nine holes of the Presidents Cup. He'll probably throw that off, but he put me on his back. I had a couple water balls and a chunk 6-iron, and he kind of put his hand around and said, "I got you, just settle in, you're good, no worries." Just he was the father influence for me on the course even though we were teammates.

And then being able to play for him as well, no different. When he comes up, he's just got a lot of wisdom. He's seen a lot in this game. He's experienced pretty much everything this game has to offer and so you trust what he has to say and he says it with such a lightness and with such influence that it kind of takes a lot of the stress away. That's how it felt as a teammate and that's how it's felt as a player for him.

Q. Foursomes is such a different format. How do you get a team ready for it and can you give us your general thoughts on do you like games together, personalities together? What do you do there?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I think it's a mixture of both. You know, you've got to make sure each player's games complement each other. You know, you even go as far as getting stats on which guy hits off the odd or the even holes when we put a pairing together. That's kind of the stuff we're going to start talking about now amongst these 12 players and the assistant captains is coming up with a good game plan as far as pairings go and who are the best four teams of foursomes that you can put out there first thing on Friday morning.

That's what we'll try to do and during our practice sessions here, we'll put guys together and then rely on them to tell us how comfortable they are in those situations.

It's a lot about for me communication has always been a big part of these teams and hearing from them and then talking to your assistants and making sure everybody's comfortable, and no curveballs. I don't want to throw any curveballs at these guys. I want them to know exactly where we're coming from and what we expect out of them going forward.

Q. Xander, when you said it was a good time for a young influx of players, what leads you to say that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I look around and I think there's Jordan, J.T., those I kids that I played against in high school. I think Stricker kind of said it. We need veterans, veterans to lead us. I'm not trying to knock on any veteran, but I think like Stricker said, the game is getting younger; Tiger Woods is to blame.

But kids are getting better and better. I feel like I'm an old guy on Tour. I'm turning 28 soon and I feel like I'm one of older guys. We have Collin on our team who is, I don't know, 23 or 24 maybe, and kids keep getting better at younger ages.

So I just felt like it was a good time for a younger influx based on that.

Q. I read where you surveyed some of these guys. What did you learn that you didn't already know, especially about the six guys that you announced here today and did you learn anything that went into this decision that you announced today?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, you're always learning when you're talking to these guys. I think ultimately I just wanted

to have, you know -- are you talking about the six guys that already made it?

Q. No. The six guys today that you announced. Anything in the surveys to them that you saw that cemented your decision to go with these guys?

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, yeah, just the way these guys play the game. I mean, they are all very impressive in their own right. Yeah, and you know, we leaned on -- we knew a couple of these guys were going to be picks early on just from their type of -- or the way they have been playing, guys they finished seventh or eighth on the list, we knew they were going to be picked, so I even leaned on them to round out the team.

You know, I want these guys to be invested. I want these guys to be invested in this team and I kind of learned that from Paul Azinger back in 2008. He kind of did a similar thing. He wanted to know our feeling about other players. Ultimately it's my decision; that lays with me.

But I want all the information I can possibly get to make those decisions, and I did. We used it all from the top six players and these guys with us today to make the final couple picks.

It was definitely a team effort I think and these guys are, like I said, totally vested in this process, and I'm excited. I'm truly excited about how this team is made up and composed of a good mix of young guys with veterans and the type of players that fit this course perfectly I think.

Q. I wanted to ask how big a role Scouts Consulting played in these captain's picks and in the pairings?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, we rely on Scouts. I'm kind of old school a little bit. I'm trying to feel like stats and a place and part, an important place in our Ryder Cup selections and pairings and all that. So I struggle with that personally myself. There's other assistant captains that kind of help me along with that that feel like it's more important, less important. We've got a good mix of guys that way.

But yeah, we looked at all that. We looked at their stats. We looked at how pairings going forward could be made with these six guys that we picked today. Yeah, we look at it all. We have long conversations with my assistant captains trying to make sure that we're going to do the right thing and pick the right guys.

So we use all of it to tell you the truth, and a lot of it is gut feeling, as well. I know a lot of these guys. I know what they bring to the table. I know what they stand for and how they want to be a part of this team and in a big way and I

know how they are going to act, and I think that's a big deal and a big part of it as well.

Q. Jordan, you've been through this a couple of times now already. Just curious how important you feel those practice rounds are this weekend. It's not really always been very practical for you guys to get to a Ryder Cup venue in advance. Now you have that opportunity, and you having played there and done well, what do you make of that?

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, we actually were able to do it in Paris, too, oddly enough, on the way to I think The Open Championship, a number of guys were able to. But we did it back in 2016 at Hazeltine, as well.

I don't see us putting hole locations necessarily in. I think it's more camaraderie. Seeing the golf course. Understanding what we need to go that next week and work on a little bit and tighten up for that golf course specifically.

And then just being in the room together. Being on the course together. Having dinner. Laughing, just maybe knocking out some of the early nerves of being on property. Recognizing, you know, how great the event is and sometimes it's nice to just kind of we arrive then the next week and feel maybe just a little bit more prepared like, hey, we were just here.

There's a lot of intangibles, so I don't see us going into massive practice round detail. I think we'll do that a lot more the week of when the course is more in the condition that we'll see it starting Friday.

Q. Piggybacking off of your comments about the Kohler family and what the properties have meant to golf and Wisconsin, and there are guys walking out now to play Whistling Straits, a couple weeks before this global event. How special is it to have an event like this at a public golf course that people from anywhere can come and play?

STEVE STRICKER: It's very special, and it's special because I was born and raised in Wisconsin. It's special for my family and special for the Kohlers, I know.

It's something that I personally thought would never happen in my lifetime was to have a golf event of this magnitude, the biggest golf event in the world held here in Wisconsin here at Herb's place. It's really cool. Wisconsin has become a golf destination and it's hard to believe that because we were in snow five or six months out of the year.

But no matter where I go and play, people talk to me about Whistling Straits, Blackwolf Run, Kohler, Wisconsin. It's really cool to see. It's cool for the people to be able to come out here and experience that, and experience it probably the last month or so with all the stands going up and to have that experience. I know my girls came up here and played and thought it was just the coolest experience because they are teeing off in the sand area there and they are going around and seeing all the work that's been done for this event.

It's just a special time for Wisconsin golf and a special time for all of us associated with Herb and his family and Wisconsin.

JULIUS MASON: We are 16 days away from the first ball being struck at the 43rd Ryder Cup. Any final thoughts is this.

STEVE STRICKER: Let's get her going, right. It's been long enough. It's about time and we're all excited to just have this event in couple weeks right around the corner. Now the fun starts. We get to be with these guys a little bit more and get that ball rolling. But yeah, it's ready. I'm sure everybody else is ready and so much looking forward to that first tee ball on Friday morning.

JULIUS MASON: Captain, well done, thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for joining us.

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